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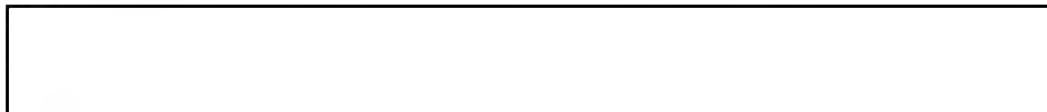
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EC Debate on Spain

The Spanish question provoked a "heated" four hour debate at last Monday's EC foreign ministers' council.

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The Council finally issued two statements. One recalled the EC efforts to prevent the executions and concluded with the hope "that a democratic Spain will be able to find her place in the concert of European nations." The second statement dealt with EC-Spain trade negotiations--stalled for the past year--and said only that the talks cannot be resumed "at present". Meanwhile the trade agreement with the original six EC members remains in force for another year.

The French, Belgian, West German and Italian ambassadors are likely to return to Madrid within a week or two but the Dutch and the Dane will not be returned for an indefinite period of time. British Foreign Secretary Callaghan was noncommittal on plans for the British emissary; Dublin's representative was not recalled from Madrid.

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Portuguese Constituent Assembly Sets Groundrules
to Curb Communist Control of Labor

The Socialist-dominated constituent assembly has approved draft articles for the new constitution that could cut the ground out from under the Communist-controlled labor confederation.

Last week the assembly, which is dominated by the more moderate elements in the Portuguese political spectrum, agreed on language pertaining to the formation of trade unions. The constitutional provisions will supercede the decree-law pushed through by the Communists last spring that now limits unions to joining a single confederation. The articles provide for:

- The free formation of labor organizations at all levels.
- The right to affiliate with international labor organizations.
- Secret ballot elections for union leadership.

Under these articles, the Socialists--who have banded together with far-leftist parties to win a recent union election--will be able to form a rival confederation to the Communists' Intersindical. If the constitution is approved in this form it will make an important contribution to the reversal of the Communists' domination of labor. Last July the Communists managed to get their representatives elected to top positions for three year terms at the confederation's congress.

In addition, the anti-Communists have taken advantage of the Armed Forces Movement's infatuation with "popular organizations" to form workers' commissions,

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which also present an alternative to Communist-controlled unions. The commissions are provided for in the new constitution so that workers can "defend their interests." The distinction between unions and workers' commissions is subtle; the commissions supposedly strive for the best possible solutions in keeping with the company's overall interests while unions are expected to demand more benefits for workers without considering the company's position.

Assembly debate on the sanctioning of workers' commissions has led both anti-Communist and Communist forces to wrestle for control of the commissions by uniting them under a national organization. The Communists announced the formation of a national secretariat of workers' commissions in mid-September in an effort to beat the Socialists to the punch. Their organizational meeting produced little more than rhetoric and has been overshadowed by the secretariat formed a week later by Socialists and far-leftists. The anti-Communists are supported by 93 existing commissions while the Communists claimed only about forty. [REDACTED]

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West German Defense Minister to Visit Portugal

The West German government probably intends Defense Minister Georg Leber's three-day visit to Portugal this week as a gesture of support for the Azevedo government.

Leber was invited by President Costa Gomes some time ago, but said that he could not accept until the political situation in Portugal stabilized. Although the Germans do not consider this accomplished, they may have concluded that an overt show of support at this time might help the anti-Communist forces.

Leber is scheduled to meet with Costa Gomes, Azevedo, Foreign Minister Antunes, and other members of the Armed Forces Movement and the political parties.

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Leber is the first cabinet-rank West German to pay an official visit to Portugal since the April 1974 coup, although many West German politicians and parliamentarians have paid informal visits.

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